

## BOOK REVIEW

THOMAS LUMPKIN and DEAN McCLARY. 1994. **Azuki Bean: Botany, Production and Uses.** (ISBN 0 85918 765 6, hbk). CAB International, Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. 800-451-7556. \$70.00. 268 Pp.

This book purports to be a monograph, including both the basic botanical and applied agronomic aspects among the "Azuki" members of *Vigna* subgenus *Ceratotropis*. The book is divided into nine chapters, including an introduction, botany, physiological characteristics, production, insects and nematodes, diseases, breeding characteristics, food chemistry and processing, and uses and marketing. The agronomic chapters contain a thorough review of the literature, but much of it refers only to the Azuki beans in general, and not to a specific taxon. As a plant systematist, I am most disappointed with Chapter 2, the Botany of Azuki. I find it superficial, and not useful for understanding the differences among the species, or the infraspecific taxa (subspecies, varieties and cultivars). A synopsis or taxonomic revision for this relatively small group could have been contributed by any one of a number of qualified taxonomists, but the authors chose to avoid a formal treatment. They state that in their Table 2.1, "No attempt has been made to correct the confusion of different classifications in the literature." That statement amounts to a fatal flaw for the work, because many of the subsequent chapters make frequent reference to various cultivar names, without link to a taxon described in the Botany chapter. For example, in the discussion of starch granules and processing (Chapter 8), reference is made to "azuki cv *Takara*," yet there is no mention of that or any other cultivar in the taxonomy chapter. Because the reader is most often unsure of the exact entity referred to, the rest of the book loses much of its usefulness, except in broad terms. I find the book hardly more than a literature review, and not a definitive monograph. Its extensive bibliography may be useful for agronomic investigators, but hardly justifies its hefty price. I would have preferred to have seen a comprehensive, well-executed systematic, agronomic and agricultural treatment, like the classic work of L. van der Maesen for *Cicer arietinum*, published in *Meded. Landbouwhogeschool* 72-10:1-342. 1972. I highly recommend that Maesen's monograph be used as a model (with phylogenetic systematics added) for economically critical and highly domesticated plant taxa. By following Maesen's model, we may better take advantage of wild relatives of currently cultivated plants, to bring useful characteristics into the cultivated from the wild. The book should be part of any major agricultural library, as a literature review source.—*John Pipoly, III*